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the accurate determinations of star-positions from photographic plates. Columbia University Observatory has had a very extensive experience in this field, and is the only institution in this country with equipment and organization suitable for doing this work on a large scale.

Since the middle of December, the nights suitable for making *Eros* observations have been unusually few, even for winter months.

W. W. CAMPBELL.

1901, January 30.

A GIFT TO THE LICK OBSERVATORY.

The Committee of the National Academy of Sciences in charge of the Henry Draper Fund (for promoting research in astronomical physics) have made a grant of five hundred dollars to the Lick Observatory, to provide lenses, prisms, slit, materials, etc., for the construction of a thoroughly modern one-prism spectrograph.

The spectrographic work on faint spectra at this Observatory was done for several years with the original visual spectroscope, provided with photographic lenses. This was unsatisfactory, on account of the very large flexure effects during long exposures. Later, our one-prism spectrography has been done with a wooden-mounted instrument. The need of a first-class one-prism instrument has long been felt; and the generous gift from the Draper Fund will provide for its construction in the near future.

1901, January 30. W. W. CAMPBELL.

COMET NOTES.

Only three comets were discovered in the year 1900, all unexpected.

Comet *a* was discovered by M. GIACOBINI at Nice, on January 31, 1900. It was approaching the Sun rapidly when discovered, and in a few weeks was lost to observation, only reappearing on the other side of the Sun toward the end of May. The last observation made at this observatory was on July 22d. The comet's path was sensibly parabolic.

Comet *b* was discovered on July 23d by M. BORRELLY, at Marseilles, and independently by Dr. BROOKS, at Geneva, N. Y., a few hours later on the same night. It was a conspicuous object in a telescope of moderate aperture for several weeks, and at its brightest, was visible to the naked eye. A number of photographs of it were secured at the Lick Observatory, some of which will be reproduced in a future issue of these *Publications*. The comet was last seen with the 36-inch refractor on December 22, 1900, at which time it was estimated as being about equal to a 15th-magnitude star in brightness. Unfavorable weather has prevented any subsequent examination. It was found so close to its ephemeris position on the date mentioned that its path cannot vary sensibly from a parabola.

Comet *c* 1900, discovered by M. GIACOBINI, at Nice, on the night of December 20th, is still under observation, though it is already so faint as to be out of reach of small telescopes. The first three observations made at Mt. Hamilton, and the orbit based on them, will be found among the astronomical telegrams in this number. The elements resemble those of Comet 1857 IV sufficiently to indicate that the two comets may belong to the same family. If so, Comet *c* may prove to be a periodic comet of long period; but further observations are needed before this point can be decided.

FINLAY'S periodic comet, which returned to perihelion early in the year 1900, was not detected, owing probably to its unfavorable position. According to the calculations of M. SCHULHOF, it will be much more favorably placed in 1906, when it will approach within twenty million miles of the Earth.

BARNARD'S comet of 1884 also escaped detection, as at its previous return in 1890 and 1895.

E. SWIFT'S comet of 1894, which may be identical with DE VICO'S comet of 1844, returns to perihelion on February 13th of the present year, and may perhaps be found after perihelion passage. So far it has not been seen, though it, as well as BARNARD'S comet, was carefully looked for by Mr. PERRINE with the 36-inch refractor.

There are several other interesting periodic comets that may be observed during the present year, viz: BRORSEN'S, which should return to perihelion this month; DENNING'S (1894), ENCKE'S, and BROOKS'S of 1886, whose perihelion passage occur in August and September, 1901, and January, 1902, respectively.

Mr. DENNING, in *Knowledge*, has called attention to the curious fact that during the century just closed, one or more large naked-eye comets were seen at intervals of about 19½ years — in

1823, 1843, 1862, and 1881. Those who are interested in this line of work will sincerely hope that later writers may be able to add the year 1901 to this list. R. G. AITKEN.

ASTRONOMICAL TELEGRAMS.

(Translations.)

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Dec. 8, 1900.
To W. W. CAMPBELL: (Received 3:05 P.M.)

DOUGLAS, of the Lowell Observatory, telegraphed last night that a projection was seen on the north edge of *Icarium Mare* * that lasted seventy minutes. (Signed) E. C. PICKERING.

BOSTON, MASS, Dec. 24, 1900.
To Lick Observatory: (Received 9:20 A.M.)

A comet was discovered by M. GIACOBINI at Nice, on December 20.313, G. M. T., in R. A. $22^{h}\ 32^{m}$, and Decl. — 22° 0′ (approximate position). Its daily motion is + 1°30′ in R. A., and —8′ in Decl. (Signed) JOHN RITCHIE, JR.

LICK OBSERVATORY, Mt. Hamilton, Cal.,
To Harvard College Observatory, Dec. 24, 1900.
Cambridge, Mass., (Sent 8:20 P.M.)
To Students' Observatory, Berkeley, Cal.:

Comet Giacobini was observed by R. G. AITKEN on December 24.6022, G. M. T., in R. A. $22^{h}\ 59^{m}\ 10^{s}.2$; Decl. — 22° 44′ 41″
(Signed) W. W. CAMPBELL.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Dec. 25, 1900.
To Lick Observatory.: (Received 8:30 A.M., Dec. 26.)

Kiel cables that Comet *c* (GIACOBINI) was observed at Nice on Dec. 24.271, G. M. T., in R. A. $22^{h}\ 57^{m}$; Decl. — 22° 45′. Approximate position. (Signed) EDWARD C. PICKERING.

LICK OBSERVATORY, Mt. Hamilton, Cal.,
To Harvard College Observatory, Dec. 27, 1900.
Cambridge, Mass., (Sent 1:57 P.M.)
To Student's Observatory, Berkeley Cal.:

Comet Giacobini was observed by R. G. AITKEN on December 26.6280 in R. A. $23^{h}\ 11^{m}\ 23^{s}.6$; Decl. — 22° 57′ 59″.
(Signed) W. W. CAMPBELL.

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* *Icarium Mare* is in Martian Longitude 320° - 345° and Martian Latitude + 30°±.